

## State of Vermont Internship Program

### *Considerations when Hosting an Intern*

- 1. Be clear and positive when talking with your interns about what they can expect during their internship.** If the job will require stuffing some envelopes, then make that clear. If you tell the intern they will be researching a project, and they spend 90% of their time filing papers then bad feelings will develop. Clarity will ensure that everyone is on the same page and will give your interns a sense of importance and respect.
- 2. Orient your intern to his or her new workplace.** This might take the form of a conventional orientation program or a walk around the office. Give interns an overview of your organization; hand out information about the agency's history, vision and services. Explain who does what and the responsibilities for which the intern will be responsible. Introduce him or her to co-workers and point out the kitchen, bathroom, and other important landmarks.
- 3. Give your intern the resources he or she needs to do the job.** If you want to get a job done, you need to supply the intern with the tools to do the job. That may sound obvious, but you'd be surprised at how many organizations stick their interns out in the hallway or transfer them from desk to desk. In doing so, you send the message that interns aren't important. Give the intern a desk, point out the supply room, and introduce the tech support people. If you don't include them and let them know that their voice is important, you could miss out on valuable contributions to your projects.
- 4. Include your intern in the daily life of the workplace.** Is there a staff meeting that they can attend? Can they quietly tag along to that next project meeting? Headed to lunch with a couple of people in the office? If you provide a little more perspective on the intern's work, the product will be much better.
- 5. Give interns real work!** It can't be said too many times that interns want to work and learn.
- 6. When you assign work, give a detailed explanation.** While the assignment may seem simple and obvious to you, it may not be obvious to someone who's never done it before. Patience and a few extra minutes at the beginning will pay off later when your intern can produce good work independently.
- 7. Keep an eye on the intern.** This doesn't mean watch their every move, but do make sure you know what's happening with their daily tasks. Watch for signs the intern is confused or bored. As often as silence means that an intern is busy, it also could mean that he or she is confused and not telling you so. It's easy to be shy in a workplace full of unfamiliar people who all know each other. Also, make sure work is taking precedence over web browsing. Paying attention early helps you head off problems and bad habits before they escalate.
- 8. Give the intern lots of feedback!** If your interns have never done this kind of work before, they'll want to know if their work is measuring up to your expectations. They need you, as a more experienced worker, to let them know if their work is officially "okay". Periodically, examine what your intern has produced and make suggestions. If your intern makes an oversight, just pull him or her aside and explain how the situation should be handled in the future.
- 9. Evaluate the intern's progress every now and then.** A few weeks after the internship begins, you should determine how well you and your intern are meeting the position objectives. Your process may be as formal as written evaluations every three weeks or as informal as an occasional lunch or coffee break with the intern.